

Differentiated Instruction Intensive Institute: Advanced Content & Application January 15, 2013 - January 16, 2013

C-1 **DI Grading Concerns & How to Respond Constructively**

Rick Wormeli

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DI Grading Concerns and How to Respond Constructively

SDE 2013

For further conversation about any of these topics:

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Discern the
Pattern and Fill
in the Last Row

- From, *Creative Thinking*, 2011, Michael Michalko,
p. 44

**Two "Just Because...Doesn't mean..."
Thoughts Before We Begin:**

*Just because we can't fathom
the logistics doesn't mean we
abandon the principle.*

Just because it's
mathematically
easy to calculate
doesn't mean it's
pedagogically
correct.

***When worried about
accountability, remember :***

There is a big difference between what we
hold people accountable for demonstrating
during the learning cycle versus what we hold
people accountable for demonstrating once they
are fully certified, i.e. finished the learning cycle
and received passing scores on valid
assessments.

Where Do You Stand?

- If a student gets a 100% on a pre-test, he should NOT have to do any assignments in the unit of study, and instead, he should do a personal research project related to the general topic of the unit while other students learn the original material. He gets an automatic "A" on the final unit test.
- Danika is borderline between a C and a B grade. In order to choose one or the other for the final report card grade, it's appropriate for her teacher to consider Danika's outstanding attitude, behavior, and high homework completion rate when determining whether to record the C or the B on the report card.

Where Do You Stand?

- On the 100-point scale, any student who turns in nothing, should get a 50 instead of a zero.
- After two weeks, all incompletes in a student's grade report should become F's (or zeroes).
- The 100-point scale is an effective grading scale for the standards-based grading classroom.

Where Do You Stand?

- An "A" or "4.0" means students have gone above and beyond the standard, not just met the standard.
- "C" refers to average performance in our school.
- Teachers in our school are consistent in their student expectations for each standard.

- Mrs. GoodTeacher counts her single-sitting, two-hour, final exam at the end of the year as 30% of the overall grade. ‘Concerns?

- Some students did well in standards 1, 2, and 5 on the test, but poorly in 3, 4, and 6. Other students did the opposite: performing well on 3, 4, and 6, but bombing out on 1, 2, and 5. Only the aggregate score of “C” is recorded for every one of these students, however. ‘Any concern here?

- All students in Mr. Brown’s class keep journals in math. The type of journal matches each student’s strengths and interests. For example, one journal is for the students whose verbal skills are stronger than their math skills. Students keep a list of math terms learned in class and then use the terms in sentences. Another journal is for students have good visual-spatial skills. These students draw pictures to remind them of math vocabulary. These journals are graded at the end of every two weeks.

- A student keeps re-doing an essay in order to improve his grade, but he seems to disregard the advice the teacher gives him on each attempt. He makes a few cosmetic changes and re-arranges some words, but there’s no substantive change. He and the teacher are getting frustrated at his lack of progress. What do we do here?

- A student has test anxiety, so his teacher schedules his exam for three, 20 min., after-school sessions over the course of three days. Instead of the short answer, multiple choice format the rest of the class is using, she conducts the test as an interview. Is this okay?

- The electronic report card used by her school averages grades, but Mr. Teachwell knows this falsifies the final grade. “Oh, well,” he thinks, “there’s nothing I can do,” and he continues to average the grades in his classroom.
- It’s January. For some wonderful reason, your student, Philip, finally completes and turns in a project from September that he never did. You thank him for doing it, but you do not give him credit for doing the work, or for the knowledge and skill demonstrated in it. ‘Any issue here?’

Are These Appropriate Re-Do Policies? Why or Why Not?

- Students should be allowed to re-do **every** assignment/assessment.
- Students should be given full credit for re-do’s, **not** partial credit.
- Final exams/projects should **not** have a re-do option.
- Re-doing assessments/assignments prepares students well for the world beyond school.
- Students who turn in assignments after the due date should get **full** credit for demonstrated mastery of content.
- Students with B’s (or any grade that’s fairly decent) should **not** be allowed to re-do assessments/assignments.

Common Grading Concerns When Teachers Move to Differentiated Instruction

- What do I do if a student is in my class, but is studying curriculum below this grade level and he’s doing well with that material? Do I grade him against his own progress or against the grade level standards?
- How do I grade English Language Learners?
- How do I grade gifted students who already know the curriculum?
- How do I grade students with learning challenges?
- If I don’t count homework, I will have too few grades in the gradebook on which to make a judgment.

**Common Grading Concerns When
Teachers Move to Differentiated Instruction**

- What if I give a student an alternative assessment, and the parent of a another student complains about me treating students unequally?
- The working world does not allow re-do's and do-over's, so if I allow them in my class, students will NOT learn responsibility and be prepared for adulthood.
- What if a student can get 100's only if he re-does his work several times. He should not be placed into an Honors or advanced course, then, even if he has an A in the class.

**Common Grading Concerns When
Teachers Move to Differentiated Instruction**

- If I accept late work, students will think they can be late with everything. They won't learn to respect deadlines.
- What if a student is working hard, but is not ready cognitively to take the test on test day?
- If I don't count elements in the academic grade like work habits, meeting deadlines, courteous behavior, and effort, students won't think it's important, and they won't do them.

**What Other,
“What Would You Do?”
Scenarios Do
You Have?**

What is the Role of Each One?

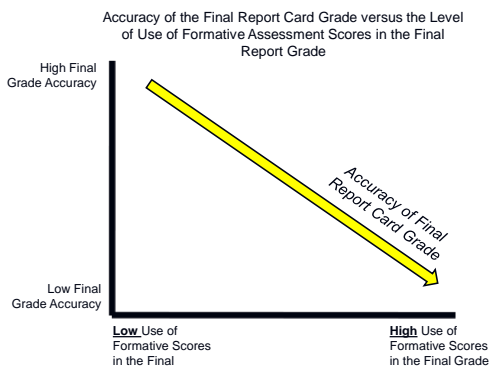
- Formative Assessment
- Summative Judgment
- Common Formative Assessment
- Standardized Assessments

Two Homework Extremes that Focus Our Thinking

- If a student does none of the homework assignments, yet earns an “A” (top grade) on every formal assessment we give, does he earn anything less than an “A” on his report card?
- If a student does all of the homework well yet bombs every formal assessment, isn’t that also a red flag that something is amiss, and we need to take corrective action?

Be clear: We mark and grade against standards/outcomes, not the routes students take or techniques teachers use to achieve those standards/outcomes.

Given this premise, marks/grades for these activities can no longer be used in the academic report of what students know and can do regarding learner standards: maintaining a neat notebook, group discussion, class participation, homework, class work, reading log minutes, band practice minutes, dressing out in p.e., showing up to perform in an evening concert, covering textbooks, service to the school, group projects, signed permission slips, canned foods for canned food drive...



This quarter, you've taught:

- 4-quadrant graphing
- Slope and Y-intercept
- Multiplying binomials
- Ratios/Proportions
- 3-dimensional solids
- Area and Circumference of a circle.

The student's grade: B

What does this mark tell us about the student's proficiency with each of the topics you've taught?

Unidimensionality – A single score on a test represents a single dimension or trait that has been assessed

Student	Dimension A	Dimension B	Total Score
1	2	10	12
2	10	2	12
3	6	6	12

Problem: Most tests use a single score to assess multiple dimensions and traits. The resulting score is often invalid and useless. – Marzano, CAGTW, page 13

100 point scale or 4.0 Scale?

- A 4.0 scale has a high inter-rater reliability. Students' work is connected to a detailed descriptor and growth and achievement rally around listed benchmarks.
- In 100-point or larger scales, the grades are more subjective. In classes in which teachers use percentages or points, students, teachers, and parents more often rally around grade point averages, not learning.

Consider:

- Pure mathematical averages of grades for a grading period are inaccurate indicators of students' true mastery.
- A teacher's professional judgment via clear descriptors on a rubric actually increases the accuracy of a student's final grade as an indicator of what he learned.
- A teacher's judgment via rubrics has a stronger correlation with outside standardized tests than point or average calculations do.

(Marzano)

Recovering in full from a failure teaches more than being labeled for failure ever could teach.

It's a false assumption that giving a student an "F" or wagging an admonishing finger from afar builds moral fiber, self-discipline, competence, and integrity.

**Re-Do's &
Re-Takes:
Are They
Okay?**

More than "okay!"
After 10,000 tries,
here's a working
light bulb. Any
questions?

Thomas Edison

From Youtube.com:

Dr. Tae Skateboarding
(Ted Talk)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHfo17ikSpY>

It takes doing a task (or revisiting
content) about two dozen times to
get to an 80% proficiency level with
that skill or content in long-term
memory.

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- It's okay to let students, "bank," sections of the assessment/assignment that are done well.
- No-re-do's the last week of the grading period.
- Replace the previous grade with the new one, do NOT average them together.
- Sometimes the greater gift is to deny the option.
- Choose your battles. Push for re-doing the material that is transformative, leveraging, fundamental.

Define Each Grade

A:

B:

C:

D:

E or F:

Until Report Card Formats catch up to pedagogy, we may have to translate into three languages:

Rubric Symbol	English	Report Card Symbol
4	Mastery	100
3	Just below mastery	90

Perspective that Changes our Thinking:

A ‘D’ is a coward’s ‘F.’ The student failed, but you didn’t have enough guts to tell him.”

-- Doug Reeves

- A
- B
- C
- I, IP, NE, or NTY

Once we cross over into D and F(E) zones, does it really matter? We’ll do the same two things: Personally investigate and take corrective action

If we do not allow students to re-do work, we deny the growth mindset so vital to student maturation, and we are declaring to the student:

- This assignment had no legitimate educational value.
- It’s okay if you don’t do this work.
- It’s okay if you don’t learn this content or skill.

None of these is acceptable to the highly accomplished, professional educator.

Why Do We Grade?

- Provide feedback
- Document progress
- Guide instructional decisions

- Motivate
- Punish
- Sort students

What about incorporating *attendance, effort,*
and *behavior* in the final grade?

Standards-based Grading Impacts Behavior, not
just Report Cards:

“When schools improve grading
policies – for example, by disconnecting
grades from behavior – student
achievement increases and behavior
improves dramatically.”

(Doug Reeves, *ASCD's Educational
Leadership*, 2008, p. 90, Reeves)

Consider...

- Teaching and learning can and do occur without grades.
- We do not give students grades in order to teach them.
- Grades reference summative experiences only – cumulative tests, projects, demonstrations, NOT formative experiences.
- Students can learn without grades, but they must have feedback.
- Grades are inferences based upon a sampling of student's work in one snapshot moment in time. As such they are highly subjective and relative.

Premise

A grade represents a valid and undiluted indicator of what a student knows and is able to do – mastery.

With grades we document progress in students and our teaching, we provide feedback to students and their parents, and we make instructional decisions.

Time to Change the Metaphor:

Grades are NOT compensation.
Grades are communication: They are an accurate report of what happened.

10 Practices to Avoid in a Differentiated Classroom *[They Dilute a Grade's Validity and Effectiveness]*

- Penalizing students' multiple attempts at mastery
- Grading practice (daily homework) as students come to know concepts [Feedback, not grading, is needed]
- Withholding assistance (not scaffolding or differentiating) in the learning when it's needed
- Group grades
- Incorporating non-academic factors (behavior, attendance, and effort)

- Assessing students in ways that do not accurately indicate students' mastery (student responses are hindered by the assessment format)
- Grading on a curve
- Allowing Extra Credit
- Defining supposedly criterion-based grades in terms of norm-referenced descriptions ("above average," "average", etc.)
- Recording zeroes on the 100.0 scale for work not done

0 or 50 (or 60)?

100-pt. Scale:

0, 100, 100, 100, 100, 100 -- 83% (C+)

60, 100, 100, 100, 100, 100 -- 93% (B+)

When working with students, do we choose the most hurtful, unrecoverable end of the "F" range, or the most constructive, recoverable end of the "F" range?

Be clear: Students are not getting points for having done nothing. The student still gets an F. We're simply equalizing the influence of the each grade in the overall grade and responding in a way that leads to learning.

Imagine the Reverse...

- A = 100 – 40
- B = 39 – 30
- C = 29 – 20
- D = 19 – 10
- F = 9 – 0

What if we reversed the proportional influences of the grades? That "A" would have a huge, yet undue, inflationary effect on the overall grade. Just as we wouldn't want an "A" to have an inaccurate effect, we don't want an "F" grade to have such an undue, deflationary, and inaccurate effect. Keeping zeroes on a 100-pt. scale is just as absurd as the scale seen here.

100	4
90	3
80	2
70	1
60	0
50	-1
40	-2
30	-3
20	-4
10	-5
0	-6

Consider the Correlation

A (0) on a 100-pt. scale is a (-6) on a 4-pt. scale. If a student does no work, he should get nothing, not something worse than nothing. How instructive is it to tell a student that he earned six times less than absolute failure? Choose to be instructive, not punitive.

[Based on an idea by Doug Reeves, The Learning Leader, ASCD, 2006]

Temperature Readings for Norfolk, VA:

85, 87, 88, 84, 0 ← ('Forgot to take the reading)

Average: 68.8 degrees

This is inaccurate for what really happened, and therefore, unusable.

Clarification:

When we're talking about converting zeroes to 50's or higher, we're referring to zeroes earned on major projects and assessments, not homework, as well as anything graded on a 100-point scale. It's okay to give zeroes on homework or on small scales, such as a 4.0 scale. Zeroes recorded for homework assignments do not refer to final, accurate declarations of mastery, and those zeroes don't have the undue influence on small grading scales.

Grading Late Work

- One whole letter grade down for each day late is punitive. It does not teach students, and it removes hope.
- A few points off for each day late is instructive; there's hope.
- Yes, the world beyond school is like this.

Helpful Consideration for Dealing with
Student's Late Work:

Is it chronic....

...or is it occasional?

*We respond differently, depending on
which one it is.*

Setting Up Gradebooks in a Differentiated Classroom

- Avoid setting up gradebooks according to formats or media used to demonstrate mastery: *tests, quizzes, homework, projects, writings, performances*
- Instead, set up gradebooks according to mastery: *objectives, benchmarks, standards, learner outcomes*

Set up your gradebook into two sections:

Formative	Summative
Assignments and assessments completed on the way to mastery or proficiency	Final declaration of mastery or proficiency

Summative Assessments						
Student: _____						
Standards/ Outcomes	XYZ Test, part 1	PQR Project	EFG Observ.	XYZ Test, part 2	GHI Perf. Task	Most Consistent Level
1.1 [Descriptor]		3.5			3.5	<u>3.5</u>
1.2 [Descriptor]	2.5	5.0	4.5	4.5		<u>4.5</u>
1.3 [Descriptor]		4.5	3.5	3.0	3.5	<u>3.5</u>
1.4 [Descriptor]	3.5			3.5		<u>3.5</u>
1.5 [Descriptor]	2.0			1.5		<u>1.75</u>

*Gradebooks and Report Cards in the Differentiated Classroom:
Ten Important Attributes*

1. Everything is clearly communicated, easily understood
2. Use an entire page per student
3. Set up according to Standards/Outcomes
4. Disaggregate!
5. No averaging – Determine grades based on central tendency, trend, mode

*Gradebooks and Report Cards in the Differentiated Classroom:
Ten Important Attributes*

6. Behavior/Effort/Attendance separated from Academic Performance
7. Grades/Marks are as accurate as possible
8. Some students may have more marks/grades than others
9. Scales/Rubric Descriptors readily available, even summarized as possible
10. Grades/marks revisable

Responsive Report Formats

Adjusted Curriculum Approach:

Grade the student against his own progression, but indicate that the grade reflects an adjusted curriculum. Place an asterisk next to the grade or check a box on the report card indicating such, and include a narrative comment in the cumulative folder that explains the adjustments.

Responsive Report Formats

Progression and Standards Approach:

Grade the student with two grades, one indicating his performance with the standards and another indicating his own progression. A, B, C, D, or F indicates the student's progress against state standards, while 3, 2, or 1 indicates his personal progression.

Responsive Report Formats

Multiple Categories Within Subjects Approach:

Divide the grade into its component pieces. For example, a "B" in Science class can be subdivided into specific standards or benchmarks such as, "Demonstrates proper lab procedure," "Successfully employs the scientific method," or "Uses proper nomenclature and/or taxonomic references."

The more we try to aggregate into a single symbol, the less reliable that symbol is as a true expression of what a student knows and is able to do.

Report Cards without Grades

Course:	Standard Descriptor	Standards Rating			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lang Arts 7					
Standard 1	Usage/Punct/Spelling	-----	2.5		
Standard 2	Analysis of Literature	-----	1.75		
Standard 3	Six + 1 Traits of Writing	-----	3.25		
Standard 4	Reading Comprehension	-----	3.25		
Standard 5	Listening/Speaking	-----	2.0		
Standard 6	Research Skills	-----	4.0		

Additional Comments from Teachers:

Health and Maturity Records for the Grading Period:

100 point scale or 4.0 Scale?

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Consider:

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- A teacher's judgment via rubrics has a stronger correlation with outside standardized tests than point or average calculations do.

(Marzano)

Accurate grades are based on the most consistent evidence. We look at the pattern of achievement, including trends, not the average of the data. This means we focus on the median and mode, not mean, and the most recent scores are weighed heavier than earlier scores.

Median: The middle test score of a distribution, above and below which lie an equal number of test scores

Mode: The score occurring most frequently in a series of observations or test data

Suggested Language to Use in Parents' Handbook:

Parents, as we are basing students' grades on standards for each discipline, final grades are first and foremost determined by our teachers' professional opinion of your child's work against those standards, not by mathematical calculations. Teachers have been trained in analyzing student products against standards and in finding evidence of that learning using a variety of methods. Please don't hesitate to inquire how grades for your child were determined if you are unsure.

Grading Inclusion Students

Question #1:

"Are the standards set for the whole class also developmentally appropriate for this student?"

- If they are appropriate, proceed to Question #2.
- If they are not appropriate, identify which standards are appropriate, making sure they are as close as possible to the original standards. Then go to question #2.

Grading Inclusion Students

Question #2:

"Will these learning experiences (processes) we're using with the general class work with the inclusion student as well?"

- If they will work, then proceed to Question #3.
- If they will not work, identify alternative pathways to learning that will work. Then go to Question #3.

Grading Inclusion Students

Question #3:

"Will this assessment instrument we're using to get an accurate rendering of what general education students know and are able to do regarding the standard also provide an accurate rendering of what this inclusion student knows and is able to do regarding the same standard?"

- If the instrument will provide an accurate rendering of the inclusion student's mastery, then use it just as you do with the rest of the class.
- If it will not provide an accurate rendering of the inclusion student's mastery, then identify a product that will provide that accuracy, and make sure it holds the student accountable for the same universal factors as you are asking of the other students.

Grading Gifted Students

- **Insure grade-level material is learned.**
- **If it's enrichment material only, the grade still represents mastery of on-grade-level material. An addendum report card or the comment section provides feedback on advanced material.**
- **If the course name indicates advanced material (Algebra I Honors, Biology II), then we grade against those advanced standards.**
- **If the student has accelerated a grade level or more, he is graded against the same standards as his older classmates.**

Great New Books on Feedback, Assessment, and Grading:

- *Elements of Grading*, Doug Reeves, Solution Tree, 2010
- *How to Give Feedback to Your Students*, Susan M. Brookhart, ASCD, 2008
- *Developing Performance-Based Assessments, Grades 6-12*, Nancy P. Gallavan, Corwin Press, 2009
- *Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us*, Daniel Koretz, Harvard University Press, 2008
- *Assessment Essentials for Standards-Based Education, Second Edition*, James H. McMillan, Corwin Press, 2008
- *Balanced Assessment, From Formative to Summative*, Kay Burke, Solution Tree, 2010

Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading

- Arter, Judith A.; McTighe, Jay. *Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom : Using Performance Criteria for Assessing and Improving Student Performance*, Corwin Press, 2000
- Benjamin, Amy. *Differentiating Instruction: A Guide for Middle and High School Teachers*, Eye on Education, 2002
- Black, Paul; William, Dylan. 1998. "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment," Phi Delta Kappan, 80(2): 139-148
- Borich, Gary D.; Tombari, Martin L. *Educational Assessment for the Elementary and Middle School Classroom (2nd Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2003
- Brookhart, Susan. 2004. *Grading*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall

Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading

- Fisher, Douglas; Frey, Nancy. *Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for your Classroom*, ASCD, 2007
- www.exemplars.com
- Heacox, Diane, Ed.D. *Differentiated Instruction in the Regular Classroom, Grades 3 – 12*, Free Spirit Publishing, 2000
- Lewin, Larry; Shoemaker, Betty Jean. *Great Performances: Creating Classroom-Based Assessment Tasks*, John Wiley & Sons, 1998
- Marzano, Robert. *Transforming Classroom Grading*, ASCD 2001
- Marzano, Robert. *Classroom Assessment and Grading that Work*, ASCD 2006
- Marzano, Robert; McTighe, Jay; and Pickering, Debra. *Assessing Student Outcomes: Performance Assessment Using the Dimensions of Learning Model*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1993

Recommended Reading

- Millan, James H. *Classroom Assessment: Principles and Practice for Effective Instruction (2nd Edition)*, Allyn & Bacon, 2000
- O'Connor, Ken; *How to Grade for Learning, 2nd Edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press (3rd edition coming in 2009)
- O'Connor, Ken; A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades, ETS publishers, 2007
- Popham, W. James; *Test Better, Teach Better: The Instructional Role of Assessment*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003
- Popham, W. James; *Classroom Assessment : What Teachers Need to Know (4th Edition)*, Pearson Education, 2004
- Rutherford, Paula. *Instruction for All Students*, Just ASK Publications, Inc (703) 535-5432, 1998
- Stiggins, Richard J. *Student-Involved Classroom Assessment (3rd Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2000

- Wiggins, Grant; *Educative assessment: Assessment to Inform and Improve Performance*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997

Grant Wiggins Web site and organization:

Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS)

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- Wormeli, Rick. *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2006